

POWER of the Holy Spirit, Pt. 5

John 7.37-39

The two-fold purpose of Jesus in coming to earth:

- To take away the sin of the world (John 1.29)
- To baptize believers with the Holy Spirit (John 1.33)

The HS is He who gives life to those dead in sin. (John 6.63; 2 Cor. 3.6; Rom. 8.11)

The HS comes to all who are saved at the moment of their salvation:

Eph. 1:13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit

Rom. 8:9 Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

Thus there is no scriptural support for a second blessing for a Christian most often referred to as “the baptism of the Holy Spirit” – a phrase not found anywhere in the Bible.

What is meant by baptism of the Holy Spirit?

It is the work of Christ in salvation. Christ not only forgives our sin and justifies us before the Father. At the same moment, He fills us with the Holy Spirit who is responsible for our sanctification – our spiritual growth and our transformation into the image of Christ.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an initial process that takes place at conversion. It is non-repeatable, and irrevocable. Thus, our salvation is secured for all of eternity.

This morning, I want to talk to you more about the baptism in the HS. We have so neglected the miracle of salvation by making it all about us that we have, as a result, missed the point of this critical part of the plan of redemption

It may all seem a bit strange and unconnected at first, but I believe if you stay with me, you will begin to understand the awesome majesty of the miracle that takes place when a person is saved.

This message is more about soteriology – the study of salvation – than it is about the Holy Spirit, but it seems that the two are so closely linked that it is almost impossible to understand one without the other.

1. In God's new creation, Jesus became the first-fruit of those who were yet to be redeemed.

When God created Adam from the dust of the earth, Adam was alive in the sense that his heart was beating, his body was functioning, and his mind was responding to his environment – just as any other living thing that God created.

The difference is that God breathed into man, creating a direct link between the Spirit of God and the spirit in man – and man became something different from all other living things – a living soul created in the image of God.

When man rebelled against God and chose unrighteousness over righteousness, this union between man's spirit and the Spirit of God died. Now, there was a gulf fixed between God and man – a condition from which there was no hope of recovery short of a re-creation of man by God.

When God determined that the time was right in His plan of redemption to send Christ into the world as a man, He did not create Jesus in the same way He created all other men.

Instead, God utilized a new method of creation process – a melding of the perfect nature of the Son with flesh weakened by the fall in a process so mysterious that God never makes any effort to explain it to us, though men have tried to comprehend it throughout the history of the church.

By the agency of the Holy Spirit, that which would otherwise have been soiled by sin was sanctified by the Spirit and made to be sin-free and thus capable of union with the righteousness of God

in Jesus Christ. That which was conceived in Mary was thus worthy of being called holy.

And thus Jesus became the first-fruit in God's creation of those who are the redeemed.

You may be asking, "What does all of that have to do with the baptism in the Holy Spirit?" I'm glad you asked, and I will try to make my point clear.

2. Jesus' death on the cross is the fulfillment of the sacrifice of the wave offering and the heave offering by which we are made holy.

Let me give you some Scripture references first that will explain the wave offering and the heave offering.

Lev. 23:10 (God said to Moses) Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, "When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest, 11 and he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, so that you may be accepted. On the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it." (ESV)

God required Israel to offer a wave offering made up of the firstfruits from their harvest – the best portions of that harvest – as a sacrifice to God to express thanksgiving for His blessing and to give glory to His name.

When this wave offering was done, the remainder of the harvest was considered holy also.

Numbers 15:17 The LORD said to Moses, 18 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land to which I am taking you 19 and you eat the food of the land, present a portion as an offering to the LORD. 20 Present a cake from the first of your ground meal and present it as an offering from the threshing-floor. 21 Throughout the generations to come you are to give this offering to the LORD from the first of your ground meal.'" (NIV)

The first dough that was made from the harvest was to be used to make a cake of bread that was to be offered to God as a

sacrifice. The bread of their labor was offered to God as a heave offering."

When this was done, the consecration of the part was then extended to the whole. In other words, the portion of the dough offered to God made all of the remainder of the dough holy.

This extension of holiness is not explained in the OT, but the concept was known to the Jews as Paul explains in...

Romans 11:16 If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches. (ESV)

Point 3 is actually a continuation of Point 2.

Point 1: Jesus is the first-fruit of the new creation.

Point 2: As the first-fruit, Jesus is the sacrifice of holiness.

As part of the new creation, we are made holy by the sacrifice of Jesus.

As the first-fruit of the new creation, Jesus is the embodiment of that first-fruit of the harvest. He was offered as a sacrifice making holy all of the fruit that was yet to be harvested. He was the bread – the bread of life – sacrificed for our sake.

(Listening guide is quite different here.)

3. After we are born again, we are made part of the new creation, justified by the blood of Christ which makes us holy as He is holy.

2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (ESV)

Gal. 6:15 For neither is circumcision now of any importance, nor uncircumcision, but only a new creation – the result of a new birth and a new nature in Christ Jesus, the Messiah. (Amp)

In salvation, the Holy Spirit continues the work of the new creation that was begun in Jesus Christ.

He first regenerates us from our lost condition – dead in trespasses and sin. We are born again – we are washed clean by our baptism in Him.

Then He comes to indwell us and makes of us a new creation and begins the process of sanctification – that process that eventually conforms us to the image of Christ.

Romans 11:16 ...if the root is holy, so are the branches. (ESV)

That is why Jesus said to us in...

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing...7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

This is what God meant when He said to Moses...

Lev. 19:2 Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy."

This is what Peter meant when He applied this verse to those saved by the blood of Christ...

1 Peter 1:15 ...as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

But what does it mean to be holy? Two pictures:

4. To be set aside or consecrated to the work of God.

Dictionary:

1. Endowed or invested with extreme purity.
In the case of God or of Christ, it refers to perfect purity.
2. Declared sacred by religious authority
3. Dedicated to the service of God

To be made holy – to be consecrated – means to be formally or specially dedicated to religious use or service. ([Source](#))

This is the definition which is the closest to the meaning of "holy" as it is used in the Bible.

Thus holiness is not just a moral or spiritual condition, but a spiritual enabling – we are made holy – empowered for the will and the work and the worship of Almighty God.

Eph. 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Acts 1:8 ...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses...

In our text for today, Jesus gave us a beautiful picture of the relationship between the cleansing that takes place at salvation, our being filled with the Spirit for sanctification, and the purpose behind it.

First of all, let me remind you that there is in Scripture a close relationship between the Holy Spirit and water.

Remember those OT prophecies concerning the HS that we read about last week:

Ezekiel 36:25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.

Isaiah 44:3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.

With that in mind, look at what Jesus said in...

John 7:37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."

In this verse, we see the picture of a man who has recently returned from the desert. His lips are cracked, his throat is parched, he is dehydrated and ravaged by thirst.

Imagine the relief when the first taste of water touches his burning lips and thickened tongue and his tortured throat. Here is a great picture of the effect of salvation.

But the picture does not end there.

John 7:38 “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”

Here the picture changes from one man to a landscape that is arid, suffering from extreme drought. The land is barren with no fruit, no crops, no pasture.

Yet once the man begins to drink, the entire land begins to feel the effects and out of him comes a river of life-giving water flowing across the barren ground.

We have often said that the Bible is the best commentary on itself, and in this case, the commentary is immediate. John, himself, explains what Jesus meant.

John 7:39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

So we know that the water Jesus was referring to in verses 37 & 38 was actually the Holy Spirit.

Christ intended to fill men with the Spirit, not as a reservoir, but as a fountain that flows through him into the community around him.

John 4:14 ...whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

All of the verbs in this verse and the verses from John 7 are in the present tense, which indicates that we are not just to come to Christ – to believe in Christ – but to keep coming and keep believing and keep drinking and keep on being filled.

But here is the part that we too often miss – we aren’t to come and drink just until we are filled, but until the water flows out of us and into the lives of others.

The natural by-product of being filled with the Spirit isn’t about how you feel about it or what you receive from it. The evidence of being filled with the Spirit is not gifts but fruit.

The natural result of being filled with the Spirit is evangelism.

A person who is filled with the Spirit may never speak in tongues, but he will speak the truth of the gospel to those around him.

A church that is filled with the Spirit won’t just enjoy the worship and fellowship of other Christians, but will be actively involved in impacting its community for Christ.

An outpouring of the Holy Spirit will naturally result in outreach to lost people.

So there is one aspect of what the God means by the word “holy.”

Yet there is much more to the meaning of holiness than this.

Not only does being made holy refer to the fact that we have been consecrated to the service of God, but also...

5. To be the meeting place of God – the temple of God.

In Exodus 4, when Moses came up to the burning bush in the wilderness, the voice of God commanded him to remove his shoes for he was standing on holy ground. Certainly God did not mean that the ground was morally and spiritually pure.

What He intended Moses to understand was that the ground had been set aside for God’s own use.

And what happened while Moses stood within that holy ground? He came face-to-face with the angel of the Lord – in fact, face-to-face with Almighty God.

The ground whereon he stood was holy, having been separated for God’s specific purpose, but that place of holiness became a place where man was allowed to meet God on a personal and intimate basis.

In Exodus 13, Mt. Sinai was not declared to be a holy mountain because it was forbidden, but because it was a place of consecration of the people of Israel to God’s service. It was not a place of separation, but a place of meeting.

Peter Gentry (SBTS): "Israel as a [holy] nation is a nation given access to the presence of Yahweh and devoted solely to the service and worship of the Lord." ([Source](#))

In Isaiah 6, when the seraphim cried out, "Holy, holy, holy," it was not a cry of separation, but a cry announcing that the righteous God of creation had come to meet with a man of unclean lips living among a people of unclean lips.

Then, in the next chapter (7), God announced the coming of the Messiah – the Holy One of God – and called His name Immanuel, which means "God with us."

When we are born again, we are baptized in the Holy Spirit – the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our hearts, bringing us into union with the righteousness of God. We are a new creation through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Our hearts become the meeting place where we come to know the living God both personally and intimately. We are reconciled to God by the blood of Christ and allowed to come into God's holy presence in the name of Jesus.

That is what Paul meant when he wrote to the church at Corinth:

1 Cor. 3:16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

1 Cor. 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own...

2 Cor. 6:16 ...we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

By the work of the Holy Spirit we are made a new creation. We are filled with the Holy Spirit so that we enter that process that God intended from before the foundation of the world – for us to be conformed to the image of the Son and to give to God the glory due His name forever.

That is what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. It is not so much about a blessing or about gifts. It is about fruit.

That's why Jesus said in...

John 15:8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

Next week, back to Eph. 5:18. How we are filled, the evidence of the filling, how we can lose the filling of the Holy Spirit.